AN HUMBLE ADVISE TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE LORD MAYOR. THE RECORDER, And the rest of the IUSTICES of the Honorable Bench.

To the good men of the Jury, and at the Sessions House in the Old-Bayley, London, *in behalf of* Mr. John Bidle, *Prisoner in* Newgate.

SInce with the Aged there is Wisdome, and with grey hairs discretion, it were a sin to doubt your readinesse to hear, and aptnesse to consider, what the meanest hath to offer, by way of clearing your passage in so dangerous a road as you are entering into, if you shall proceed to the Triall of this learned Lamb like Christians, Mr. *John Bidle*.

And though for other causes experience may have fortified your judgements, so as Advise may seem presumption, yet in that you have cause to doubt and to fear, that you are pressed with these or the like snares, through the subtil lyings in wait, by which many holy, innocent, and precious mens lives have (even in this place) been causelessly taken away. So therefore when you read the Books of the Martyrs of the Primitive times, and of those in the bloody daies of Queen *Mary*, or of the lesser sanguin daies of Queen *Elizabeth*, you rejoyce with exceeding joy as you run over these sad stories; finding none of

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your Predeceſſors hands in thoſe bloody Councels or proceedings, and would not for to gain the world be your ſelves guilty of the like. Let therefore your proceedings be with circumſpection, leſt afore you are aware, you are intangled paſt hopes, and do the things you have ſo much loathed in others.

And though you may all ſtand clear in this matter in the ſight of God, both in the preſent and for all future times, be pleaſed, according to your ſeveral places, to conſider what thoſe things are, wherein perſons in the like places, and in the like caſes, have been uſually miſled, and it will appear in all times, as in the preſent, that the firſt evil which attends the Magiſtrates to incite and ſtir them up againſt conſcientious perſons, is the miſtaken or uninformed zeal of Proſecutors, (of which no time was ever wanting) who having got an ordinance, or Act of Parliament, the Decree of a Councell, or Aſſembly of Divines, declaring ſuch or ſuch opinions to be Blaſphemous, Heretical, or Schiſmatical, think they need no more for their warrant, but preſently fall to their buſineſs, watching and ſpying over the works and writings of conſcientious perſons. Thus having by an uncomely or unhandſome kind of diligence gotten ſomething, which they ſuppoſe Parliament Laws judg Blaſphemy, inſtantly they run therewith unto the Magiſtrate, crying out Blaſphemy, Blaſphemy, never ſuch Blaſphemy ſince the world was created, name the perſons, the place, the writings, and cry out for Juſtice, which in their ſenſe, is a preſent ſeizure, and impriſonment of the perſon thus cried out on.

What a ſtrait now in this caſe is the Magiſtrate in, if he enquire after the Juſtice of the Law, or the nature of the opinion againſt which Blaſphemy is cried, or after the peaceableneſs of the Party, or his reſponſeableneſs or readineſs to appear, if he incline to ſend gently for him, and uſe not the utmoſt rigour his authority can warrant; he likewiſe for his meer ingenuity and humanity herein, incurs the cenſure of favouring Heretikes, Schiſmatikes, and Blaſphemers, ſo as the Magiſtrate, even againſt his own inclinations, is as it were ſurprized, and inforced by importunate clamors, to deal with godly peaceable people oftentimes, as with the moſt notorious Thieves, Harlots, and Murtherers, ſending for them by like Warrants, and no nay, but Bail muſt be refuſed, ſent to the ſame infamous priſons, as this Mr. *Bidle* to *Newgate*, to be tried for his life as a Blaſphemer.

This is the firſt evil the Magiſtrate is liable to in occaſions of this nature, and is the cauſe of all ſucceeding evils, and being ſo, how neceſſary is it for all Honorable perſons in Authority to ſtand upon their Guard

Guard againſt ſuch dangerous aſſaults as theſe, which if yeelded unto, in the end draweth on them that fearful ſentence, *James* 5. 6. *Ye have condemned and killed the juſt, and he doth not reſiſt you*; a heavy ſentence, and due to too many of your Predeceſſors in this place, for want of a timely and conſcionable conſideration of the dangerneſs of the thing they had in hand, God evert it from your Honorable Society.

All agree that it is beſt to kill temptation in the bud, and therefore to be provided againſt theſe clamorous onſets, is the beſt part of prevention, to which end it is requiſite to be skilful in the conditions of theſe, (viz. Mr. *Thomas Underhill*, *Luke Fawne*, *Nathanael Webb*, and *George Calvert*) and the like Informers alſo in the true nature of Blaſphemy, and to be able to diſtinguiſh of opinions, and to try them by ſome more certain Touchſtone, then by the imperfect Vote of Parliaments, Synods, Councels or Aſſemblies, al which have moſt groſly erred, frequently condemned Truth for Error, nay eſtabliſhed Error by a Law, and ſuppreſſed the moſt certain Truths, by which the moſt righteous and godly in this Nation have under pretence of Law, which is grievous injuſtice, been baniſhed, impriſoned, tormented, & murthered.

As to the condition of theſe Informers, how good an eſteem ſoever ſome may have of them, yet they are very like unto thoſe tumultuous perſons in *Acts* 16.19. who caught *Paul* and *Silas*, and drew them into the Market place unto the Rulers, and brought them to the Magiſtrates, ſaying, *Theſe men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our City, and teach cuſtoms which are not lawful for us to receive, nor to obſerve, being Romans*. Here was a ſpecious pretence, as if the trouble of the City lay heavy at their hearts, and ſet the men to complain; and it is like enough the Magiſtrates believed them to be well-meaning people, zealous of the good and quiet of their Country, nor ever had been otherwiſe underſtood, but that it pleaſed the holy Spirit of God, for diſcovery of ſuch Hypocrites, and for forewarning all Magiſtrates againſt ſuch clamorous deceivers, to demonſtrate in the 16. *v.* that the true cauſe of their complaint was the loſs of their gains, which they wickedly made out of the Damſels evil Spirit of Divination, whom *Paul* caſt out. Whereunto agreeable is that alſo of *Demetrius*, in *Acts* 19. where their gain by making ſhrines being in danger to be taken away by *Pauls* Doctrine, he and his Accomplices ſticks not by his clamors to put the whole City into an uproar; ſo you ſee it is no new thing, for fear of loſs, and hope of gain, to move the Springs of the heart with a wicked ſuggeſtion, when the tongue and face ſpeaks nothing but Religion and publike zeal; and if the ways of Informers in all former Ages were

looked into, even from the Perſecution in the Primitive times, to the times of *John Huſs*, *Jerom* of *Prague*, *William* of *England*, and throughout all the daies of Queen *Mary*, Qu. *Elizabeth*, King *James*, and King *Charles*, (through all which times, more or leſs, there was perſecution for Conſcience) it was groſſly manifeſt, that fear of loſs, and hope of gain, were the only or chief motives to all the Informers, ſo as at beſt it renders theſe ſuſpected, and they may be as guilty as any of the former, though they themſelves perceive it not, for the heart is deceitful above all things, nor doth any thing benum the conſcience, and blind the underſtanding ſo much, as fear of loſs, and hope of gain.

And if theſe mens ways be thought on, it will be more then probable, that they are not clear in this matter, being for the moſt part Bookſellers; it's known that Books of Divinity are their chiefeſt ſale, both in Sermons and other Treatiſes, and that they buy, and ſomtimes pay dear for their Copies. Now the opinions which are charged upon Mr. *Bidle*, are croſs and contradictory to the grounds of their moſt ſtaple Copies, and to the main part of their ſale, and conſequently threatens their gain: Is there not then a ſtrong provocation upon their ſpirits to withſtand ſuch Doctrines, and to take up the ſame courſe to do it, by ſtirring up the Magiſtrate to impriſon and put to death ſuch Blaſphemers, for leſs they cannot call him, to have him effectually ſilenced.

If it be not thus, why of all ſorts of men that daily have heard and read Mr. *Bidles* judgment, without trouble or regret of mind, nay (though not of his judgment, yet honoring and highly eſteeming of him for his manifeſt piety of life and great learning) why ſhould the Traders in books be ſo violent againſt him, as that nothing but his life will ſatisfie them? Why have not ſome of thoſe who often hear him? Why not ſome of the private Churches, that are moſt of them oppoſite in judgment? Why have not they perſecuted him, and in deteſtation of his opinions forced him before the Magiſtrates, ſo to priſon and perſecute him to the death? Do they all of them, and all other conſcientious people want zeal to God, to Chriſt, and to the holy Spirit, to ſet them on? Nay, why ſtartle they not, but on the contrary, divers of the gathered Churches, and other well-affected perſons, petition his Highneſs appear againſt his moleſtation, and earneſtly preſs for his liberty; but becauſe they know whatever his judgment is, the way to make him of another belief, is not by impriſonment or fear of death, (Chriſt nor his Apoſtles having left any ſuch rule) but by admitting the points in difference to be freely diſputed and examined, and as *the noble* Bereans, *to ſearch the Scriptures, whether thoſe things are*

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so or no. Somwhat must be the matter that these Bookſellers thus beſtir themſelves above others, whereforeit is the beſt and ſafeſt courſe for the Magiſtrate upon ſuch ſtrong preſumption, to provide againſt the worſt, and to conclude them at beſt but dangerous Informers, moſt pernicious counſellors, and not in the leaſt to be ſwayed by their ſpecious pretences of zeal, but to ſuſpect all their ſuggeſtions, as proceeding from covetous and corrupt hearts; for were they indeed ſo ſenſible of Chriſts Honor as they would be thought, certainly you would find them firſt purging their own ſhops of all kinds of Popiſh, and wanton ſcurrilous books, invented purpoſely to corrupt and vitiate youth, or if they can excuſe themſelves herein, which ſome will not credit, yet they cannot but know ſuch as thoſe are thick and threefold ſold round about them, and yet their zeal burns not that way at all, the reaſon whereof, what can it be, but that it oppoſeth not their way of gain, elſe would not they offer one Petition more in behalf of the Proteſtant cauſe, for the ſuppreſſing ſuch Books, and the impriſoning ſuch perſons as writes them, who nautiate youth, and hath no pretence of Conſcience from the Word of God to ſhelter them, but that, I ſay, it hinders not their way of gain, as they underſtand M. *Bidles* Books, Doctrins, or Opinions do, which makes them ſo maliciouſly zealous againſt him, and to let the others go ſcot-free.

Magiſtrates were they thus rightly informed of the condition of theſe Informers, and thus ſtrongly armed againſt ſuch clamorous zealots, they would not ſo ſuddenly, nor ſo reproachfully diſpoſe of the perſons of men fearing God, as throughout all former times was lamentably done, and ſomwhat too much in Mr. *Bidles* caſe; they would then have time to deliberate upon the matter, before they ſent a man to priſon, they then, no doubt, would exerciſe their own judgments, as Chriſtians, and ſee what is alledged againſt any man, and deal as becometh Chriſtian Magiſtrates, according to the known and revealed Word of Chriſt manifeſted in the holy Scriptures.

Which word of Truth, being not *yea* and *nay*, as Parliaments, General Councels, Synods, and Aſſemblies have all proved in the moſt material points in Religion, as your Honors, the Bench, and Jury cannot but effectually know: For one Councel determining that the Son of God was the moſt high God, another Councel, as namely that of *Ariminum*, conſiſting of no leſs then four hundred Biſhops, decrees point blank (as we are wont to ſay) againſt the former, that the Son of God was not the moſt high God, but a diſtinct Eſſence from him, and ſubordinate unto him. This inſtance, amongſt many, have I produced,

ced, to ſhew the mutability of Councels, as alſo to ſhew how cautious you ſhould be of putting to death a learned man for that opinion, which ſo many learned and famous men, not only have been, but ſtill are in the world of his opinion, as you ſhall hear, if you enquire of thoſe who have been in *Poland, Holland, &c.*

This bleſſed unerring rule, (viz. the holy Scripture) to Conſcience, being ſincerely looked into, it will impartially diſcover, both to Judg and Jury, what M. *Bidles* opinions are, and how he is to be dealt with-all concerning them, without a ſingle ear given, whereunto the Laws of Parliaments may ſoon cauſe you all to be moſt grievous tranſgreſſors of the Laws of God, and to be more guilty in his ſight, before whom one day you muſt all be judged, then thoſe Priſoners you condemn. Whatſoever therefore the Law of the Lord ſayes to your underſtandings in this caſe of M. *Bidles*, let none by no arts draw you from enquiring into the Scriptures for ſatisfaction in every particular.

In which enquiry, though your Honor, Mr. Recorder, and the whole Honorable Bench are all highly concerned to look unto it, that you may acquit your ſelves before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, and be able to render an account with joy.

Yet you good men of the Jury are more neerly concerned to be exact and faithful therein, for it is your Verdict, your guilty or not guilty, that ſaves, or deſtroys his life, which you are mainly to note, and to lay to heart, and to be all along mindful of it, that if you pronounce him guilty (which God defend) you do not only find him guilty of ſpeaking ſuch or ſuch words, or of writing and publiſhing ſuch or ſuch Books, but in pronouncing him guilty upon either of the Indictments, you pronounce him a Felon, and deſervedly to die; ſo that unleſs in every one of your conſciences he appears worthy to die as a Felon, you are in conſcience bound to pronounce him not guilty, otherwiſe you may be his deſtroyers before you are aware, to your perpetual grief and anxiety of ſpirit, for ſo it befel the Jury that were the Tryers of M. *Udall*, a worthy Miniſter of Gods Word in Queen *Elizabeths* days, he was Indicted for High Treaſon, in making and publiſhing a certain Book againſt the Government of the Biſhops, and though there was no direct, but a ſcambling ſhadow of a proof, and though the Books duly conſidered, contained no colour of Treaſon or other crime, no more then M. *Bidles* of Felony, but ſuch as the times ſince have proved as true as Truth its ſelf, yet the Jury not thinking in pronouncing him guilty, they had pronounced him guilty of Treaſon, and to die as a Traytor, ſuppoſing they had only declared him guilty of making the

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Book, hereupon they brought him in guilty; but when after the Judges sentence of death against him, which they never in the least intended, that they found what they had done, they were confounded in themselves, and would have done any thing in the world to have revoked their Verdict, when alas it was too late, and therefore you are to be exceeding careful in this main particular; never to pronounce him guilty, unless your consciences are first satisfied he ought not to live, but to die as a Felon, which is altogether impossible, if you shall seriously and deliberately weigh all circumstances touching the man & his opinions.

For first, as to the man, he is so free from being questioned for any the least blemish in his life and conversation, that the Informers themselves have been heard to admire his strickt exemplar life, full of modesty, sobriety and forbearance, no ways contentious touching the great things of the world, but altogether taken up with the things of God revealed in the holy Scriptures, wherein his study, diligence, and attainments have been so great, that his knowledg therein is of as ready use as a Concordance, no part thereof being named, but he presently cites the Book, Chapter, and ver. especially throughout the Books of the New Testament, where all the Epistles he can say by heart out of the Greek Tongue, and withal can read the Greek in English, and the English in Greek so readily, as a man can do the meer English, so carefully hath he been rightly to understand them. As to the Justice and integrity of his heart, his wayes have manifested, that he would not dissemble, play the Hypocrite, or deal fraudulently with any man to save his life; such is he certainly, as is known to very many persons of worth and credit in *London*, so as he is far from being such a Monster as many have believed him to be, through the uncomely and unchristian-like clamours of his Accusers.

For his opinions you have heard at large, and frequently with what he is charged not to believe, be pleased to be so just to your selves and him, as to give ear, and seriously to note what he professeth, and is known to believe, there being a cloud of Witnesses ready to testifie that he makes it his glory to confess with his mouth the Lord Jesus to be his Lord and his God, according to the Scripture, *John* 20.28. to be his Saviour, *Acts* 5.31. and by him doth believe in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, 1 *Pet.* 1.21. Having set him at his right hand, Angels, Authorities, and Powers being made subject to him; and that he is made unto us of God, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption, 1 *Cor.* 3.30. That he is the only begotten Son of God, and to be honored as the Father, *John* 5.23. that it is he that

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ordained of God to be Judg of quick and dead, *Acts* 10.42. that he is the Author of eternal life to all those that obey him, *Heb.* 5.9. that there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, *Act.* 4.12. that his Blood is the Blood of the new Covenant that is shed for many for the remission of sins, *Mat.* 26.18. and that he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, *Heb.* 7.25. How then, or upon what ground can any man justly term him a Blasphemer? he conceiveth to be according to the Scriptures; if further then this he understands not, and for want of understanding perceiveth not the Scriptures, do maintain Christ the Son to be coequal, coeternal, and coessential with God the Father, and thereupon should deny Christ to be the most high God, shall he be put to death for it? Surely none can suppose a man of so much learning, discretion, and piety, can do this maliciously, with full purpose to dishonor the Lord Christ, whom he so much trusteth in, and honoreth, as is before expressed; nay, can it be supposed, but that he who attributes so much honor to him, as those Scriptures forecited manifest, would with all his soul render him all whatsoever by any other Scriptures he understood to be his due? nay, the least measure of charity may very readily admit, that if such a pious man as he is deny him any part of honor, that he doth it, because he conceives that granting of it would be to his dishonor, and that he did believe he would be much displeased to have it attributed unto him; shall this fear, and wariness in him find (admit that it were evidently an Error in his judgment) no lower title then Blasphemy? and for this, will nothing satisfie the Informers but his life? What thoughts have these men of the Lord Christ, that came not to destroy, but to save mens lives? that will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoaking Flax; that called not the *Sadduces* Blasphemers, nor Heretikes, nor denounced judgment upon them, either of imprisonment or death, no though they came to tempt him, though they denied the Resurrection, and said, there was neither Angel nor Spirit; yea so far was our most merciful Lord Christ from so harsh a spirit, that he saith, *John* 12.47,48. *If any man hear my words, and believe not them, I judg him not, the word that I have spoken, the same shall judg him at the last day:* and rebuketh those, *Luke* 9.54. who through a rash unadvised zeal, (much like what at best appeareth in these Prosecutors) that would have called for fire from heaven to have consumed the *Samaritans*, saying, *Ye know not what spirit you are of*; a sentence worthy to be written in letters of Gold, in every place of Judicature in the world, but especially in the hearts of all men trusted, as you are, with the lives of men.

Turks

Turks and *Infidels* are allowed, in order to their converſion, to ask any queſtions concerning God, Chriſt, or the Holy Spirit, to affirm, or deny, as they ſee cauſe, without being termed Blaſphemers for ſo doing, yea, rather pity their miſtakings; nay the Jews that ſpeak ſuch opprobrious language of Chriſt, as is not fit to be repeated, denying not only his Godhead, but his moſt holy and heavenly Conception, yet are they not impriſoned, nor Indicted for Blaſphemers, nor moleſted, but ſuffered to live quietly amongſt us, for which way elſe ſhall they ever be converted to the Faith of Chriſt? Why then is it ſo hainous a thing in M. *Bidle* to ſay he doth deny this or that opinion of Chriſt, to that end it may be proved by Scripture? Why doth not ſome zealous perſon ſhew him wherein he is miſtaken, without calling him a Blaſphemer? Will it ſuffize to quit a man from the guilt of ſuch an ignominious appellation, to believe every article of the Apoſtles Creed, if it will, it is then moſt certain this good man Mr. *Bidle*, believes all and every Article thereof, in every reſpect, as they are there expreſſed? If this will not ſuffize, but that *Athenaſius* his Creed muſt in every circumſtance be believed alſo, or thoſe that cannot underſtand it, and conſequently cannot believe it in all points, ſhall be deemed Blaſphemers, by moſt, aſſuredly it would be thought too harſh a judgement; for do you but obſerve with what ſatisfaction, with how much alacrity the conſcience cloſeth with the former ſaying, *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jeſus Chriſt his onely Son our Lord, which was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, born of the* Virgin Mary, *ſuffered under* Pontius Pilate, *was crucified, dead, and buried, deſcended into hell, the third day he aroſe again from the dead, and aſcended into heaven, and ſitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from thence he ſhall come to judge both the quick and the dead: I believe in the Holy Ghoſt, the Holy Catholique Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveneſs of ſins, the Reſurrection of the body, and the life everlaſting.* There being no Particle of this Belief, (as Mr. *Bidle* uſeth to affirm) but that even in ſpeaking, it preſents a plain place of Scriptnre to the minde for proofe thereof.

Whereas in reciting that of *Athenaſius*, (which was the ground of that Ordinance of the Lords and Commons, in making it Blaſphemy to affirm ſo, and ſo, concerning Chriſt and the Holy Spirit) what infinite doubts and ſcruples do ariſe? as where it is ſaid, *For there is one perſon of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghoſt, but the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt is all one, the glory equal, the Majeſty coeternal; ſuch as the Father, ſuch is the Son. and ſuch is the Holy Ghoſt; the Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghoſt uncreate,*

the Father incomprehenſible, the Son incomprehenſible, and the Holy Ghoſt incomprehenſible; the Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghoſt eternal, and yet they are not three eternals but one eternal; as alſo there are not three incomprehenſibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehenſible; ſo likewiſe the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Ghoſt almighty; and yet there are not three almighties, but one almighty, &c. And in this Trinity none is before nor after another, none is greater or leſſer then another, but the whole three perſons be coeternal together, and coequal, &c.

It is true, moſt men of years living in this Nation, have through breeding and cuſtome been formerly uſed to recite this Creed, as what they did believe, but how few there were that did truly underſtand it, that is, that did truly believe what they ſaid, and ſeemed to believe, you can now very eaſily judg; nay how glad would al ingenuous Chriſtians be, that theſe difficulties might without danger be clearly diſcuſſed, by ſtrength of Scripture, that ſo men might no longer have things run in their mind, as believed by them, which in deed and in truth they do not underſtand, nor are able to render a reaſon of the hope that is in them, touching many of the particulars, which is no better then hypocriſie and groſs ſuperſtition, for though men may hide their hearts from men, yet from themſelves, and from God they cannot hide them.

Now becauſe Mr *Bidle* hath laboured in this work, to enquire how theſe obſcure difficult expreſſions in this Creed are proved in Scripture, which he taketh for the foundation of his faith; and becauſe he hath not been contented to take up other opinions concerning God, according to the current of Interpreters of our times, but ſtill ground himſelf upon the Scripture, for this cauſe only is he now a priſoner, and for no other; for this cauſe, and none other, doth his Accuſers, the Informers, deem him unworthy to live.

But it is hoped with you he will find a much more charitable and Chriſtian eſteem, for what at worſt can be alledged againſt him, or what can warrant the taking away of his life.

For admit the words or Books ſhould be fully proved againſt him, and that you ſhould think ſuch Accuſers and Witneſſes worthy of belief, when not the glory of God, or of Chriſt, but their own gain hath ſet them on.

Admit that mens lives may be taken away by an Ordinance of the Lords and Commons, out of time of Parliament, which will not be granted, *England* being to be ruled by Acts, not Ordinances, ſo as therein alſo the foundation fails, for he is tried upon no other but an Ordinance. Again, ſuppoſe the Ordinance, Law, there is nothing of obſtinacy expreſſed in the

Indictment

Indictment againſt Mr. *Bidle*, without which he doth not offend againſt it; but were the Ordinance in force, it directs the priſoner to be Indicted the next Goal delivery, but M. *Bidle* was not Indicted till the ſecond Goal delivery, after complaint and impriſonment, wherefore the Ordinance is not purſued, but the time prefixed elapſed. Yet further, admit there were an Act, and in force, yet that a Parliament can be truſted in matters of Religion and Conſcience, the Scripture never warranted, men cannot truſt, becauſe they muſt obey, not what Parliaments eſtabliſh, but what the Scripture ſaith to their particulat Conſciences; ſo as if Parliaments underſtand the Scriptures one way, and you another, whether are you to yeeld to their ſenſe or your own? whether are you to believe and worſhip as they direct, or as you judg your ſelves directed by the Word of God? ſo that the making of Laws by Parliaments in matters of Religion, Faith, and Gods Worſhip, which God never did, and men cannot truſt them withal, ſo that although this Ordinance were an Act, and were not annihilated by the inſtrument of Government, as indeed it is in Mr. *Bidles* caſe, you could not with innocent conſciences find him guilty upon it. If Mr. *Bidle* be not protected by the inſtrument, none are; for you will find it evidently intended by the 36. 37. and 38. Articles, which ſay thus:

36 *That to the publique profeſſion held forth, none ſhall be compelled by penalties, or otherwiſe, but that endeavours be uſed to win them by ſound Doctrine, and the example of a good converſation.*

37 *That ſuch as profeſs Faith in God by Jeſus Chriſt (though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worſhip, or diſcipline publikely held forth) ſhall not be reſtrained from, but ſhall be protected in the profeſſion of the Faith, and exerciſe of their Religion ſo as they abuſe not this liberty, to the civil injury of others, and to the actual diſturbance of the Publike Peace on their parts, provided this liberty be not extended to Popery or Prelacy, nor to ſuch, as under the profeſſion of Chriſt, hold forth and practiſe licentiouſneſs.*

38 *That all Laws, Statutes, Ordinances, and clauſes in any Law, Statute, and Ordinance to the contrary of the aforeſaid liberty, ſhall be eſteemed as null and void.*

Mr. *Bidle* now profeſſeth Faith in God by Jeſus Chriſt, and that truly, not notionally; and as the compilers of the inſtrument by their words ſhew us they did intend: As for Popery, Prelacy, teaching or practiſing licentiouſneſs, ſo free is he from theſe, as none taxeth him with it, How then can it be, that his differing in judgment from the doctrine, worſhip, or diſcipline publikely held forth, ſhould exclude him any more then any other man in the Nation from protection in the profeſſion of the Faith, and exerciſe of his Religion, ſince he no way abuſeth this liberty, to the

civil injury of others, nor doth any thing to the disturbance of the publike Peace on his part, but on the contrary, demeaneth himself peaceably and quietly, as becometh a Christian, and exhorteth others to do the like.

The true sense and meaning of these Articles, or of the intention of the Law-makers thereof, you can no otherwise know, from any person or persons whatsoever, so as to be satisfactory to your consciences, but from the words and expressions themselves which do most evidently and plainly afford M *Bidle* protection from all Laws and Ordinances before made, and from all kinds of trouble and molestation.

As for proving any the opinions alledged against him to be Blasphemy in the Scripture sense, is impossible to be made appear.

It is true indeed by the Law of *Moses*, a Blasphemer was to be put to death, and you hear often that Scripture urged, to incite you to judg such to death, as are at any time indicted here for Blasphemy; but you are to be aware of Scripture misapplied, there being no speedier way to misery and destruction, Christians being not to be swayed in their judgments and consciences by the rule of the Law of *Moses*, but by the precepts and examples of Christ and his Apostles: Yet if Mr. *Bidle* were to be tried by the Law of *Moses*, unless it do appear, that by the Law of *Moses*, these things, or words, or books in the Indictments are declared to be Blasphemies, or such crimes, as for which men ought to die (which that declareth not) there would be no ground at all from thence to proceed against him.

And as for any warrant from the New Testament, you have heard already how gently Christ himself dealt with the misbelieving *Sadduces*; as also with those that would not receive his Word, and how he reproved such as would have had fire from heaven to consume the *Samaritans*; so as from thence nothing will ever justly be raised to endanger his life in your hands, nay, not to countenance his least molestation.

For let the utmost that can be urged from these places, by the misapplication of which, many a well meaning Judg and Jury man hath been in this place misled, to the sad destrnction of many innocent men fearing God, for the daies are still in remembrance, and will never be forgotten, whenas Parliaments were so unchristianlike busie in making Laws in matters of Religion, touching Faith, and the Worship of God, that amongst other snares laid to intrap good mens lives, they enacted to this effect, *That whosoever should deny the very Body and Blood of Christ to be really in the Bread and Wine, after the words of Consecration, should be put to death, as being an Heretique or Blasphemer.* Whereupon divers Informers of those times set themselves, and were by the then Clergy secretly put on, to lay in wait, and gather up such words, as rendred enquiring Christians,

which

which were willing to be satisfied of the truth of so strange a mystery obnoctious to their cruelty, most of the Informers being Booksellers, whose trade was sure to fail, in case this mystery, of which their Books were full stuffed, should be proved but a delusion, bestirred themselves to purpose, halling and driving multitudes before the Bishops, who soon sentenced them, and turned them over to the civil Magistrates, to be put to death for Blasphemy and Heresie.

Where by the way, your Honor, and the Honorable Bench, and especially you good men of the Jury, are to observe with what reverence, nay, with what adoration, this error, this the grosseſt error in all Popery, (as Mr. *Bidle* useth to call it) was every where believed, and no marvel whenas Parliament Law had made it death to dispute or deny it; and then how here in *England*, where liberty of debating and disputing this mysterious point hath been long time admitted; this gross error hath been wrought out of most mens understandings, (which effectually sheweth the real necessity and benefit of freedome in dispute, and arguing of all points, none excepted; and what enemy to the truth those are, this Christian liberty) yet still to this day, where Laws of State govern in matters of Religion, and where conscience and discourses are overawed with Laws of Imprisonments, Banishments, and death, as in most of the Popish Dominions they are, there this grosse error, which now through Gods mercy appears to every considerate person one of the greateſt and most palpable mysteries of iniquity, is nevertheleſſe admitted, and received with the same, if not higher respect and admiration then ever, which shews also of what Tribe and Kindred they are, that would have setled here again in this Nation a coercive or constraining power in matters of conscience, belief, and the worship of God.

And truly, whil'st you have this mysterious point of the real presence of Christs Flesh and Blood in the Sacrament, and cannot but wonder how it should enter into mans heart to be believed, it being so expresly contrary to every ones perseverance, tasting therein very Bread, and very Wine, even after the words of Consecration. whilst you have this in mind, and through how many difficulties, and impossibilities, and wrackings of the understanding by Sophismes and subtil arguments, men were made to believe, that they did believe the real presence to be there, when it was impossible for any, though they said they did so much as to understand it, for so grosse an error did never appear a reality or truth to the understanding. Be pleased, whilst your thoughts are thus imployed, to reflect upon the opinions which are charged upon M. *Bidle*, which for more easie consideration present themselves in this form, *That he is indicted as a Blasphemer, for denying the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, that the Father is the*

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moſt high God, the Son the moſt high God, and the Holy Ghoſt the moſt high God, and theſe are not three moſt high Gods, but one moſt high God. This any man may affirm he believeth, and moſt men do affirm they do believe it, and it is like the Informers would not ſcruple to ſwear they do believe it, as thoſe of the former times, no doubt, would have ſworn, they both underſtood, and believed the real preſence in the Sacrament; but dealing clearly and conſcientiouſly with your own hearts, Is not this a myſtery moſt difficult to be underſtood? Can any thing be more myſterious? Do you imagine that one of an hundred underſtands it, who yet through fear of the Law, and awe of death, ſaves he believes it? Is any point in Chriſtianity more obſcure in Scripture? Why did not *Athenaſius* affix thoſe places of Scripture to his Creed, upon which he grounds his judgment; whereas in place whereof, he gives you only this for proof, That as we be compelled by the *Chriſtian verity* to believe, what in this his Creed he affirms ought to be believed, ſo, ſaith he, are we forbidden by the *Catholike Religion* to acknowledg whatſoever he therein denies. Now you know the Real Preſence was a long time here taken for a main part of *Chriſtian verity*, and men were interdicted and forbidden, under pain of death, to deny it by the *Catholike Religion*; (for the Church of *Rome* was thought to be no leſſe then the Catholike unerring Church) ſo as this his *Chriſtian verity*, and this his *Catholike Religion*, are in theſe times of enquiry but ſlender proofs, and may very well admit of diſpute, and a demand of plain Scripture proof to prove them, and it is a very hard caſe if men for argument ſake may not deny any thing *Athenaſius* therein affirms, or affirm any thing he therein denies, the purpoſe and intention being to ſee what Scriptures can be brought for full proof of the things diſputed; nay, if any conſcientious Chriſtian ſhall really think *Athenaſius* miſtaken in his myſterious opinions, what offence is it to declare his thoughts, and to deny them? Every one knows by *pro* and *con* truth comes to be eſtabliſhed, it is only error that requires no arguments or diſputations, but that of Law, and the Sword on its ſide, unhallowed weapons to combat with error, truth being ever Vanquiſher where thoſe odds are not: It is not denied, that the moſt myſterious opinions may be true, but it muſt be only Scripture that proves them ſo, and then if freedom of diſpute and argument be allowed, the more theſe truths are oppoſed or denied, the clearer the truth ever appeareth, truth being like that houſe built upon the Rock, that ſtands the firmer for being aſſaulted; error like the houſe built upon the Sand, which had need keep oppoſition far from her by the out works of Law, and threats of death, for ſo you ſee it ſpeeds beſt, and continues longeſt, as that abominable error of the Real Preſence, which whilſt hedged about by Authority and Law, was with the ſlighteſt arguments, and even with Scriptures a-

buſed, able, and did even in this place deprive many of Gods dear ones of their liberties, yea of their very lives, by the moſt cruel tormenting deaths their malicious Proſecutors and Informers could deviſe.

An Heretique he was that denied the Real Preſence, that the Parliament Law enacted, and an Heretique or Blaſphemer muſt be put to death, that alſo the Parliament took care for: They alſo made the poor beſotted ſuperſtitious people believe, that it ſuffized not, except the Scriptures warranted it; and therefore they never failed to urge the Scripture in *Titus* 3.10 11. *A man that is an Heretique after the firſt and ſecond admonition, reject, knowing that he that is ſuch is ſubverted and ſinneth, being condemned of himſelf*: So then, ſay they, (as ſome will not fail to apply it to M. *Bidle*) the Priſoner at the Bar is an Heretique, why? for he denieth the Body and Blood of Chriſt to be really and corporally in the Sacrament; ſo ſuch an one is a ſinner, and perverted from the Chriſtian verity, and from the Catholike Religion, and is condemned of himſelf: Yes, ſaith the Arch-biſhop, it is impoſſible but he muſt condemn himſelf, his evil is ſo palpable, only he is obſtinate, and will not acknowledg or confeſſe it: Well then, what is to be done with ſuch an Heretique? Why, the Scripture ſaith, after the firſt and ſecond admonition reject. We and our Clergy have admoniſhed him often and again, to forſake his wicked Hereſie, yet ſtill he perſiſts, therefore is to be rejected, that is, ſay they, and the ignorant ſeduced Juries of thoſe times believed them, let him be put to death; yea, ſay they, the Scripture is plain, *Gal.*5.12. *I would they were even cut off then trouble you*: which though every conſcientious Chriſtian knew in the Apoſtles ſenſe never intended more then an Excommunication, as doth alſo the forecited reject; yet theſe falſe counterfeiting Apoſtles never failed to interpret, a cutting off by death. But to ſtrengthen theſe further, they urge 2 *Pet.*2.1. with great vehemency againſt the poor innocents, *But there were falſe Prophets alſo among the people, even as there ſhall be falſe teachers among you, who privily ſhall bring in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction.* This nail they drive home into the Saints Temples, crying out, *Theſe are they that deny the Lord that bought them*, for they deny him to be corporally preſent in the Holy Sacrament, away with them to fire and faggot, *for they bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction.*

And this place of Scripture was ſo violently urged in the late Parliament againſt Mr. *Bidle*, and made, or ſeemed to make ſo deep an impreſſion in the very zealous part of them, that they were even ready to Vote upon a ſwift and ſudden death, and were very hardly with-held from it, nay, had done it, but that the more conſcientious amongſt them replied ſoberly, that this place of Scripture could not poſſibly be applied to M. *Bidle*,

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it being evident that he was so far from denying the Lord Jesus Christ to be the Lord that bought him, or from denying him to be the Messiah, the Christ, the Redeemer, that all the writings called his, and his discourses, did manifest that he did believe in his heart, and confesse with his mouth the Lord Jesus to be his Lord and his God (as afore is more largely expressed) which if it shall please you to consider, together with what in the third ver. is said of the false Teachers, viz. *and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make Merchandize of you*, ye will find it reaches not Mr. *Bidle* in the least, none in the world being more free from the loathsome sin of covetousnesse, or from making Merchandize of any, every one that knows him, knoweth that he having food and rayment, is therewithall content, and that he (if any one in the world) accounts godlinesse with content, the greatest gain in, so as when all the whole Scriptures are searched for matter against Mr. *Bidle*, let them be but impartially considered, and they will appear no more in justification of his molestation imprisonment, or further punishment, then they were in approving the barbarous cruelties inflicted upon those former sufferers.

So that upon your serious considerarion of all things, it cannot be doubted, but that Mr. *Bidle* is as safe, whilst your Christian consciences thus rightly informed, stand between him and death, as if he were at his own disposing, and being so through your godly care of him, you will acquit your selves as wise and discreet Christians in the sight of God, and stanch that innocent Blood, which hath violently been let run formerly in this place upon like occasions, and free both your selves, your posterity, and this Honorable City from Judgments and plagues due for the same. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.